

BETZVILLE TALES

Uncle Ashdod Clute's Last Breath

By Ellis Parker Butler
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ILLUSTRATED BY PETER NEWELL



"Creepy Mouse, Creepy Mouse, Tickley, Tickley, Tickley!"

It is a terrible thing to have a life-long enemy—so my Uncle Ashdod Clute of Betzville says—and we who have none should be thankful. Last Thursday Uncle Ashdod nearly perished through an enmity that culminated on that day.

When Uncle Ashdod was a boy of 11 he began fishing in Mud creek, and the very first time he threw in his hook he caught a pike, but when he pulled it out it was such a thin, small, miserable little skimp of a fish that he was as mad as a hornet, and he stood right up and told the pike what he thought of it and then slammed it back into the creek, and thought no more about it. But that pike did a pike is the most vindictive kind of fish; terribly vindictive; and never forgets an injury. Year after year that pike lay low and nursed its anger and planned revenge, and poor Uncle Ashdod knew nothing about it. He never suspected it in the least, he says. He would have treated that pike the same as he would have treated any other fish, if he had met it, he says.

Things went along that way for 52 years, with Uncle Ashdod Clute thinking nothing at all, and the pike gnawing its cankerous heart out for a chance of revenge, and last Thursday it thought it saw its chance.

There was Uncle Ashdod sitting on the bank of the creek with his pole stuck in the mud beside him, when suddenly there came a cloud-burst a mile or so up the creek and almost instantly the creek began to rise by leaps and bounds. Before Uncle Ashdod, who isn't as spry as he used to be, could get to his feet the creek was up to his knees, and there in the water was the monstrous big pike dashing and slashing at him with its jaws wide open, and leaping out of the water in a frenzied attempt to catch Uncle Ashdod by the neck and drag him down to death.

Any pike can leap like a deer, but this pike was a wonderful leaper, and Uncle Ashdod saw there was only one chance for his life, and that was to climb a tree. So he made a dash for a big pine and jumped for the lower limbs, and all the time the water was rising, and no matter how fast he climbed the tree the water rose as fast and there was the big pike right facing him and gnashing its teeth. Every moment the pike would make a leap, and before it could fall back into the water the water would overtake it. In that way Uncle Ashdod climbed the tree, with the creek and the pike never three feet behind him, until it began to look as if he would run out of ground, and he knew that if he reached the top of the pine and the water kept on rising the pike would swim in and complete the deed it had set its heart on.

But just as he reached the top the water began to fall as rapidly as it had risen, and the pike gave one cry of futile anger and made a last enormous leap and grabbed Uncle Ashdod by his long gray whiskers which were blowing out over the topmost limb, and at that moment Uncle Ashdod fainted and dropped. It hadn't been for the pike Uncle Ashdod would have been dashed to death, but once a pike gets hold of it is like a bull-dog; it never lets go. So there they hung by his whiskers, one on one side of the limb and one on the other, like a pair of saddle bags, until Uncle Ashdod recovered from his faint.

Then there was a terrible battle. Uncle Ashdod put up his hands and took a good hold of the limb, and began to kick the lower end of the pike, and the pike tightened its grip on Uncle Ashdod's whiskers and began to slash at his legs with its cruel bony tail. It looked like about an even fight, for if Uncle Ashdod had boots on, the pike had tough scales, and there they fought, face to face. Uncle Ashdod said he never in his life

saw anything so awful as the look that pike's eyes as it hung there. Already Uncle Ashdod's boots were slashed to strips and every blow of the pike's tail cutting him to the bone, while he hadn't seemed to make any impression on the tail of the pike, and he was giving himself up for lost. He didn't have a knife or any sort of weapon to aid him. And then, as a sort of last resort, he took one hand from the limb and tickled the pike in the ribs.

Uncle Ashdod says he had never heard that pikes were ticklish, but he had never heard that they were not, either, and when a man is on the verge of death he will try anything as a last resort, so he thought he might as well try tickling the pike as anything else.

Well, at first the pike seemed more amused than anything else. It sort of screwed up the corners of its mouth and grinned, but in a minute or two it began to chuckle inwardly. So Uncle Ashdod kept right on tickling it. He says it was the most weird thing he ever saw in his life, to see that pike chuckling away as if it was in the best humor and at the same time glaring at him hatefully with its eyes. So he tickled it a little harder and it began to gasp between its teeth but it did not loosen its hold on his beard in the least. So he tickled it a little harder and said: "Ketchy-ketchy-ketchy." Well, that was too much for that pike. Its sides began to heave and palpitate with laughter, and its tail curled up and it tried to throw its head back the way a man does when he hears an awfully good one and is going to give a mighty hearty laugh, and it began to gasp.

When that happened Uncle Ashdod says he began to have hope, and he pulled his finger back and sort of corkscrewed it toward the pike and said: "Creepy mouse, creepy mouse, tickley, tickley, tickley!" At the last "tickley" he says he dug his finger into the ribs of the pike, and the pike seemed to simply double all up with laughter, and suddenly it opened its mouth and shouted: "Ha! Ha! Ha!" and turned blue in the face and fell spang to the ground as dead as a door-nail.

Uncle Ashdod says that of course he hated to take life in that way, but he was sort of forced to do it in self-defense. I asked him what he really thought of the fight and he said he was still too wrought up to say. I asked him what he thought the pike thought of a fight of that kind, and he said he guessed the pike liked it; he said the pike seemed tickled to death.

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A Business Asset.
The owner of the only red brick building in a downtown block of gray buildings decided to paint his building the prevailing tone. Without previous announcement of his intention to the tenants he sent the painters around on Monday morning to begin work. When the tenants learned his purpose they put up a mighty howl.

"Change the color of this building?" they said. "Why, this vivid red is one of our best business assets. It helps to locate us. Being the only red building in the neighborhood, it sticks in the minds of people who can't remember the number, but can direct others to us just because we are doing business in a red house. We have stayed here all these years on account of the conspicuous color. If that is changed we shall move."

The owner listened to these plaints patiently. Then he went ahead and painted the building a brighter red.—New York Times.

NATION TOO LONG ON SPREE.

Surely Time an End Came to the Reckless Extravagance of the Dominant Party.

Jefferson said that the accounts of the United States government should be as simple as those of a well-kept farm. So they are in some respects. For one thing, the income and the outgo, though expressed in terms of hundreds of millions, are as plain as the earnings and expenditures of a clerk or mechanic.

If a clerk or mechanic earned \$1,000 a year and spent \$1,200 he would soon be forced to discover new sources of income or get into trouble with his creditors. Uncle Sam is in the same predicament. Though his income is in the neighborhood of \$600,000,000 per annum, he is spending much more than that, and that is why we are hearing of new taxes at Washington.

Men sometimes become reckless and, going on a spree, indulge in many extravagances from which they must recover by economy. So nations sometimes go to war and draw down their surplus and become involved in debt. If they do not return to the old habits of life they must impose more taxes or suspend payment. The United States government spent more money last year than it did during the year of the Spanish war, and almost as much as the average yearly expenditure during the four years of civil war.

When is the great national spree on which we entered during the Roosevelt administration to come to an end?

The Secret Revealed.
The secret of the Roosevelt administration's attitude toward the sugar trust is finally revealed in an article from the pen of the Hon. Bwana Tumbo himself, printed in the current issue of the Outlook:

"There must be law to control the big men, and therefore especially the big corporations, in the industrial world, in the interest of the industrial democracy of to-day. The law must be efficient, and therefore it must be administered by executive officers, and not by lawsuits in the courts."

This explains everything. In order to proceed against the trust for its wanton violation of the Sherman law it was necessary to have a lawsuit "in the courts." The trust would have had to be tried like any other offender. Punishment could not be administered offhand "by executive officers." Obviously the only thing to do was to ignore Mr. Earle's evidence and give the trust immunity; otherwise the Roosevelt administration would have placed itself in the deplorable position of countenancing due process of law under the constitution.

Fight or Surrender.

The signs and portents are ominous of an accommodation between the president and the standpat leaders in congress under the terms of which he will come out shorn of the honors as well as the spoils of war. There can be no serious claim that the senate project is other than a mockery of what the president has repeatedly insisted that revision must be in order to meet the equities of the case and retain for his party the respect of the country.

So to pretend to add insult to injury, so far as the public is concerned, but Mr. Taft cannot afford to advance a plea which even Aldrich, Lodge and Penrose are ashamed to hide behind. The issue as presented has been interpreted once and again by the president himself. There is no middle ground for him between a fight on full vindication and total surrender to the extremists.—Norfolk Virginian-Pilot.

Stand Pat Lunacy.

This from the foremost Republican protectionist newspaper—the New York Tribune:

"The restoration by the senate of the duty on hides was to be expected. It is in line with the general policy of the finance committee and its followers to nullify the reductions in rates made in the house bill and to re-shape that bill in the exact image of the Dingley law."

"The victory of the finance committee only emphasizes the 'standpat' character of its tariff program. No duty levied by the Dingley law is less defensible on grounds of rational protection than the duty on hides."

If in the light of such protests from their own section of their own party these senators cannot foresee the political results of such a tariff program they must be past praying for.

Are they besotted with self-sufficiency—or do they really want to provide a clamor for Roosevelt in 1912?

The causes of mutiny in the Philippines are exactly what the causes of mutiny were in British India—in general, denial of the right of self-rule; in particular, denial of high promotion of native troops. Our "eastern proconsuls" have learned nothing.

It is rather strange that no reports have come from Africa telling how many tsetse flies have fallen before Mr. Roosevelt. Are the cables in working order?

At the Wrong Window.

The man who walked into the treasury at Washington and demanded a million dollars went to the wrong place. He should have gone to Aldrich and asked for a clause in the tariff.—N. Y. Evening Post.

No Need to Worry.

Suppose under a certain increase three cents were added to the cost of a \$1.50 shirt? That would only make it cost the ultimate consumer \$1.75. Why worry?—Indianapolis News.

Playful Massachusetts Natives.

"Si Haskins has begun trainin' fer th' big pigeon shoot over tew Northampton."

"Has he?"

"Yep. He shot at three balloons from out Pittsfield way Sat'day mornin'."

—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Speed.

"Is your new motor car developing any speed?"

"I should say so," answered Mr. Chuggins. "It can make a thousand dollars go so fast you hardly have time to notice it."

—Washington Star.

STOPPED HER SONG OF JOY.

Slight Forgetfulness That Marred the Full Appreciation of the Welcome Rain.

"Isn't that a lovely shower?" exclaimed Mrs. Randall to her friend in the parlor as they gazed out on the sudden downpour.

"Yes, we need it so badly." "Need it? I should say we did. It's a God-send! Why, our goldenglows, hyacinths and roses out in the back yard are shrinking for the want of rain. The sprinkler can't take the place of rain, you know."

"Indeed not." "Oh, I tell you this is just lovely! See how it pours! And to think that just when everything threatens to dry up and every one is praying for rain nature answers these appeals and sends us beautiful—Good heavens!" "What's the matter?" "I've left the baby out in the yard!" —The Circle.

MAKING UP RIGHT QUANTITY.

President Taft's Willful Misinterpretation of Little Girl's Intended Haughty Rebuke.

President Taft is fond of children, with whom he is a favorite. A charming story on this head comes from Cincinnati.

Once when a pretty Cincinnati girl was a child of six or seven, Mr. Taft, calling at her house, found nobody home excepting herself. She entertained him a little while, and when he rose to go, he stooped down and kissed her.

"Here's one," he said, "for the baby. Here is another for little Jim. And here is a third for Billie-boy." The little girl, drawing herself up, said haughtily—she had been reading a novel: "Mr. Taft, you forget yourself!" He bent down again. "So I did," he laughed. "Well, here's one for myself!"

DREADFUL DANDRUFF.

Girl's Head Encrusted—Feared Loss of All Her Hair—Baby Had Milk-Crust—Missionary's Wife Made

Two Perfect Cures by Cuticura.

"For several years my husband was a missionary in the Southwest. Every one in that high and dry atmosphere has more or less trouble with dandruff and my daughter's scalp became so encrusted with it that I was alarmed for fear she would lose all her hair. After trying various remedies, in desperation I bought a cake of Cuticura Soap and a box of Cuticura Ointment. They left the scalp beautifully clean and free from dandruff, and I am happy to say that the Cuticura Remedies were a complete success. I have also used successfully the Cuticura Remedies for so-called 'milk-crust' on baby's head. Cuticura is a blessing. Mrs. J. A. Darling, 310 Fifth St., Carthage, Ohio, Jan. 20, 1908."

Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., Sole Props., Boston.

TRUE RESIGNATION.



Old Maid—Is it really true that marriages are made in heaven? Doctor—Yes, I believe so. Old Maid (resignedly)—O, then, doctor, you needn't call again.

TIRED ALL THE TIME.

Languor, listlessness, dullness of spirits are often due to kidney disorders. Pain and weakness in the back, sides and hips, headaches, dizziness, urinary disorders are sure signs that the kidneys need immediate attention.

Delay is dangerous. Alonzo Adams, Osceola, Iowa, says: "My kidneys failed me. I suffered awful pain and was so weak I could not work, and often had to take to bed. I was dull and exhausted nearly all the time. I consulted doctors and used medicines, but only Doan's Kidney Pills helped me. Soon I was permanently cured."

Remember the name—Doan's. For sale by all dealers. 50 cents a box. Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, N. Y.

The Happiest.
In the smoking-room of the Finland, discussing a June wedding, Andrew Carnegie said:

"And thank goodness it wasn't an international marriage, though the bride did have 18 millions." "Not," appended Mr. Carnegie, "that I object to international marriages wherein the two parties are good and honorable and well matched. But so many of these marriages are like one that a Boston cynic described to me."

"Was it a happy marriage?" I asked this Bostonian.

"Oh, quite," said he. The bride was happy, her mother was overjoyed. Lord Lacland was in ecstasies, and his creditors, I understand, were in a state of absolutely endless and uncontrollable bliss."

Royal Great-Grandmother.
The birth of a son to the youthful duke and duchess of Sudermania gives to royal Europe what it has not had for more than ten years, namely, a great-grandmother. The lady to whom this honor has come is the Grand Duchess Constantine Nicolaievitch, who was, before her marriage, Princess Alexandra of Saxe-Altenburg.



The Biggest Thing for Breakfast

Kellogg's Toasted Corn Flakes is the "Big Thing" in two-thirds of American Homes. We will have the other third in a very short time. It only requires one taste to make permanent Corn Flake eaters. Its delicious flavor can't be described. You must try the genuine Kellogg's—to fully know its goodness. Ask your grocer.

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Watch this paper for further particulars.

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NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT.



"Why, Mrs. Jones, what are you doing out in all this rain?" "Oh, I just ran out to buy an umbrella!"

Had to Hear Evidence.

Some ladies were visiting at Blanche's home one day. During the conversation, while the visitors were there, one of the ladies was describing how the blowflies laid eggs and they hatched out as maggots. Four-year-old Blanche did not seem to be frightened.

She sat for a long time interested in the conversation nor pay any attention to what they had been talking about. After the visitors had gone, Blanche said:

"Mamma, I don't believe flies lay eggs."

"Why?" asked the surprised mother. "Because I never heard one cackle," explained the doubting Blanche.

Sheer white goods, in fact, any fine wash goods when new, owe much of their attractiveness to the way they are laundered, this being done in a manner to enhance their textile beauty. Home laundering would be equally satisfactory if proper attention was given to starching, the first essential being good starch, which has sufficient strength to stiffen, without thickening the goods. Try Defiance Starch and you will be pleasantly surprised at the improved appearance of your work.

Wanted to Defer the Petition.

A Los Angeles mother tells the following: "One summer's eve my little son of six years was sent to bed at his usual time; but he could not sleep. Upon my inquiry what troubled him, he replied: 'I can't finish my prayer. I've got as far as 'Forgive us our trespasses' as—but I can't get any further, for Howard licked me to-day and I want to lick him to-morrow.'"

Crime.

She—I can't bind myself until I'm sure. Give me time to decide, and if, six months hence I feel as I do now, I will be yours.

Ardent Wooer—I could never wait that long, darling. Besides the courts have decided that dealing in futures, without the actual delivery of the goods, is gambling pure and simple.—Puck.

Decollete.

Wu Ting Fang, at a dance in Washington, criticised the modern ballroom belle. "Like the ancient Briton, who dressed in blue wool," he said, "the belle's idea of a magnificent toilet seems to be plenty of paint and very little clothing."

The Facts.
"Do poets ever really starve?" "Well, maybe not. But we seldom ever get a chance to overeat."

Lewis' Single Binder cigar. Original in Tin Foil Smoker Package. Take no substitute.

Learning without thought is labor lost, thought without learning is perilous.—Confucius.

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Allen's Foot-Ease, a powder for the feet. It relieves painful, swollen, smarting, nervous feet, and instantly takes the sting out of corns and bunions. It's the greatest comfort discovery of the age. Allen's Foot-Ease makes tight-fitting or new shoes feel easy. It is a certain relief for ingrowing nails, perspiring, callous and hot, tired, aching feet. It is always in demand for use in Patent Leather Shoes and for Breaking in New Shoes. We have over 30,000 testimonials. TRY IT TODAY. Sold by all Druggists, 25c. Do not accept any Substitute. Sent by mail for 25c. in stamps.

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Sex in Cromwells.

Of course with the sexes on a footing of equality as regarded opportunity, it would not be long until a female Cromwell made her appearance, and, having made her appearance, was getting her portrait painted.

The painter, once more a fawning, courtly fellow, would have the picture a flattery; but she rebuked him in words that became historic! "Paint in the hips!" she commanded, sternly, showing that she could be more rigidly devoted to the truth than Oliver himself.—Puck.

Another Step Needed.

"I like my house all right," said Luschman, "except for one thing. I guess you'll have to fix that." "What is it?" asked the architect. "Several times lately I've nearly broken my neck reaching for another step at the head of the stairs when I got home late, so I guess you'd better put another step there."—Catholic Standard and Times.

Better than gold—Like it in color—Hamlin Wizard Oil—the best of all remedies for rheumatism, neuralgia, and all pain, soreness and inflammation.

We lose money and comfort, and even temper sometimes by not learning to be more careful.—Dickens.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup.

For children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures whooping cough. Be a bottle.

The softer a man's head the more he is inclined to butt in.

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